

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN HONOR OF RAYNA LEHMAN

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 17, 2021

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Rayna Lehman as she retires from her position of community service with the San Mateo County Central Labor Council. Rayna's remarkable 39-year career at the council, and her years of work in labor before joining the central labor council, were labors of love.

It is impossible to fully describe the scope of Rayna Lehman's work in our community since she first joined us in 1970, a young woman with a cat, a guitar and a big smile. In the past 51 years, she became a union painter, led the union, served on the labor council, and filled numerous civic positions including on the San Mateo County Childcare Partnership Council, the First Five Community Steering Committee, a countywide Blue Ribbon Task Force on Healthcare to expand healthcare access, a taskforce to ensure the equitable rollout of the Affordable Care Act, the county planning commission, the state Workforce Investment Board, the countywide school to career partnership committee, and dozens of other positions of leadership leading to improvements in the health, earning power and dignity of San Mateo County residents.

From 1982 to the present, Rayna Lehman served the labor council as the first Community Services Director and Labor Liaison to the United Way Bay Area. It's been a wild ride.

The community services director is an all-encompassing title. Her efforts to fight hunger and deter evictions during recessions were lifelines for thousands. During one recession in the 2000's, Rayna created a program to re-tool union members to work in the emerging biotechnology sector. Time and again, Rayna distributed thousands of bags of groceries to unemployed workers. During the 2020 pandemic, the total reached 22,600 families. If you estimate four persons per family, that's 12 percent of the county's population.

Rayna Lehman is about success for all. She knew that in San Mateo County, both parents need to work. She helped found Palcare, a nonprofit center offering care for children from three months to five years of age 24 hours a day. Palcare focuses on meeting the special needs of workers whose schedules require very early and nighttime work. It's an extraordinary success, affordable by design, and it allows workers to know that their children are safe and offered a quality preschool education while their parents are at work. Rayna served on the board and in other leadership positions at Palcare for many years.

Equal opportunity is the promise of America and a requirement if we are to sustain our democracy. Good jobs in labor begin with apprenticeships. In fact, Rayna was the first female apprentice in Painters District Council 33. In her job with the labor council, she no-

ticed that San Mateo County's union halls were not recruiting enough women or young people from marginalized communities. Rayna began a pre-apprenticeship program that allowed students to improve their math and social skills, and to learn about safety on the job, among many subjects. The program is a wild success, always full, and a pathway to the middle class for hundreds.

In 1982, while I served on the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, it was my honor to serve with Rayna on the first San Mateo County Advisory Council on Women, later to become the Commission on the Status of Women. The purpose of the council/commission is simple yet profound: To improve the lives of women in San Mateo County. Rayna served from 1982 to 1986 and during that time we held Feminization of Poverty hearings and made many recommendations ultimately leading to change. We also created the San Mateo County Women's Hall of Fame. In 1990, Rayna was inducted into the hall of fame she helped create.

San Mateo County is a beautiful place but in recent years a troubling undercurrent has emerged. The lack of affordable housing makes life increasingly difficult for tens of thousands. Rayna Lehman has been a strong advocate at city councils for affordable housing and for a livable minimum wage. She cannot help herself—she believes in the dignity of human beings and in the possibility of any honest and caring person to contribute greatly to our nation.

As I close these remarks, let me note the obvious: Rayna Lehman is a loving person. She loves her twin sons Patrick and Benjamin and their spouses Amanda and Kelly. She loves Bill, a truly fortunate husband. In addition, Rayna's expanded family is all of us in San Mateo County. She expresses her love by protecting and celebrating as many as possible.

Rayna is now retiring. The concrete reality of human beings fed, ennobled and celebrated is evidenced in ways large and enduring throughout our county. Farewell Rayna. If that guitar is still around, please strike a chord for justice. Truth be told, you wrote the song.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION TO COMBAT WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 17, 2021

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today, I introduce the National Commission to Combat Workplace Sexual Harassment Act to establish a national commission to examine and combat sexual harassment in the U.S. workplace.

I have modeled this bill on legislation Congress has passed to address other national

problems considered to be serious, such as gambling. The almost daily exposure of allegations of sexual harassment, including the recent allegations made against New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, more than qualifies sexual harassment for national attention and priority. This bill would create a national commission to focus on sexual harassment in major industries and workplaces throughout the United States.

Congress has adopted legislation that addresses harassment in the congressional workplace. It requires Members of the House and Senate to be personally liable for settlements and awards resulting from harassment and retaliation claims, removes mandatory counseling, mediation and "cooling off" periods for accusers that had been required, mandates publicly reporting awards and settlements and covers unpaid staff as well. These steps move in the right direction beginning where Congress should—right here in the Congress itself. However, nothing equivalent has been done for sexual harassment that affects the American people. We have largely neglected our own constituents, despite the increasing number of troubling reports in the news of sexual harassment claims.

A national commission would assure the American people that Congress takes sexual harassment affecting them—the typical worker—seriously, beyond the high-profile examples, such as allegations against Harvey Weinstein, Jeffrey Epstein, Governor Cuomo and the Congress itself, that have garnered the headlines. Most importantly, the commission would hear from a cross section of the public—from office and factory workers to retail and food service employees—whose experiences with sexual harassment have received almost no national attention. The commission could travel or invite witnesses to Washington from throughout the country to recommend changes in laws or regulations and best practices on preventing, training, investigating, responding to and penalizing sexual harassment in the private and public sectors.

Our constituents expect Congress, which represents every sector, to take on the problem of sexual harassment throughout our national economy, including private and public (Federal, state and local) workplaces. A national commission could help reach and reduce sexual harassment, a form of gender discrimination, where the average American works.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF MEGAN BARBERO

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 17, 2021

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the extraordinary service of Megan Barbero, who served for more

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